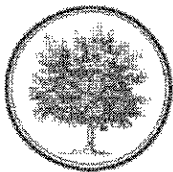


From: The Buckeye Institute
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To: Adams, Alexandra
Subject: Buckeye Urges Greater Spending Restraint and Tax Reform in Budget

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 1, 2017

Buckeye Urges Greater Spending Restraint and Tax Reform in Budget

Greg R. Lawson Testifies before Senate Finance Committee

Columbus, OH - In testimony (scroll down for the complete testimony) before the Senate Finance Committee on Ohio's biennial budget (Sub. H. B. No. 49), **The Buckeye Institute's** Greg R. Lawson urged the Ohio Senate to "pursue meaningful reform" in a number of key policy areas that will reign in government spending, reform Ohio's tax code, increase educational choice and improve Ohio's criminal justice system.

"State budgets are always about more than just dollars and cents. They represent more than simply funding state programs. The state budget process gives legislators and policymakers the chance to adopt policy preferences and priorities for the next two years," said Lawson, research fellow at The Buckeye Institute. "That's a golden opportunity to pursue meaningful reform that shouldn't be missed."

Building on The Buckeye Institute's **2017 Piglet Book**, and commentary written throughout the budget process (**What the Ohio Senate Should Do with the Biennial Budget and House Substitute Budget: A Missed Opportunity for Bold Reform**), Lawson outlined areas where the Ohio Senate can improve the budget and provided specific policy recommendations for the members to consider.

Lawson encouraged the Senate to consider the following:

- More spending reductions;
- A small, across-the-board income tax cut and modifications to the small business tax deduction;
- Embracing the governor's education funding policies and changing the "safe harbor" provisions so that the **EdChoice scholarship program** functions as designed;
- Adopting most of the House of Representative's Medicaid provisions-except for returning to the governor's managed care proposal regarding the Aged, Blind, and Disabled community;
- Adopting the governor's proposed budget for the Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, especially the **Targeted Community Alternatives to Prison** program's expansion;
- Returning to the governor's proposals regarding need-based Local Government Fund allocations;
- Re-examining and eliminating occupational license fee increases; and
- Retaining limits on the Controlling Board's authority to spend unanticipated federal dollars, and curtailing the Board's authority to raise occupational license fees.

In concluding his testimony, Lawson praised the reforms lawmakers have made that have improved Ohio's economy. "Despite economic headwinds and clouds still looming along the horizon, Ohio has improved its prospects for job- and income-growth. As the first green shoots of growth begin to blossom, the biennial budget provides Senators with the perfect opportunity to set a bold course for Ohio's prosperity."

###

**Interested Party Testimony Submitted to the
Ohio Senate Finance Committee on the Biennial Operating Budget**

**Greg R. Lawson, Research Fellow
The Buckeye Institute for Public Policy Solutions**

June 1, 2017

Thank you, Chairman Oelslager, Vice Chair Manning, Ranking Member Skindell, and members of the Committee for the opportunity to testify today regarding the biennial budget. My name is Greg R. Lawson, and I am the research fellow at **The Buckeye Institute for Public Policy Solutions** here in Columbus.

State budgets are always about more than just dollars and cents. They represent more than simply funding state programs. The state budget process gives legislators and policymakers the chance to adopt policy preferences and priorities for the next two years.

That's a golden opportunity to pursue meaningful reform that shouldn't be missed. The Buckeye Institute believes that the current budget proposal up for your consideration requires a number of critical changes in order to take full advantage of this biennial opportunity to make Ohio more prosperous. Our recommendations include changes to government spending, tax and education policies, Medicaid, and local government policies.

We would encourage the Senate to consider the following:

- More spending reductions;
- A small, across-the-board income tax cut and modifications to the small business tax deduction;
- Embracing the Governor's education funding policies and changing the "safe harbor" provisions so that the **EdChoice scholarship program** functions as designed;
- Adopting most of the House of Representative's Medicaid provisions-except for returning to the Governor's managed care proposal regarding the Aged, Blind, and Disabled community;
- Adopting the Governor's proposed budget for the Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, especially the **Targeted Community Alternatives to Prison (TCAP)** program's expansion;
- Returning to the Governor's proposals regarding need-based Local Government Fund allocations;
- Re-examining and eliminating occupational license fee increases; and
- Retaining limits on the Controlling Board's authority to spend unanticipated federal dollars, and curtailing the Board's authority to raise occupational license fees.

With the Committee's permission, I will explain these recommendations in more detail.

Spending

The House of Representative's budget *appears* to reduce Governor Kasich's budget proposal by \$12.8 billion over the fiscal years (FY) 2018-19. Unfortunately, much of the apparent reduction is unlikely to be realized. More than 96 percent of the House's on paper reductions manifest in two areas: a fiduciary pass-through account that collects municipal income taxes in order to redistribute them; and Medicaid.

First, the Governor's budget proposed a large increase to this account as part of the Governor's proposed business net-taxes filings. The House modified that proposal and thus reduced the Governor's expected appropriations by \$944 million.

Second, the House budget calls for significant reductions in Medicaid spending that, in our view, are unlikely to materialize. The House appropriates \$5.6 billion less than the Governor proposed for FY18, and \$5.8 billion less for FY19. This intentional underfunding dovetails nicely with the House's new "guard rails" on the Medicaid program that will require Controlling Board approval every six months in order to increase Medicaid spending, and assurances that the Administration is pursuing Medicaid reforms, including Healthy Ohio and other state innovation waivers.

We agree with these efforts to tether the "Pac-Man" of Ohio's budget, but we assume that the Administration will seek those waivers and that the Controlling Board will therefore release most of the Medicaid funds. Consequently, the House's "reductions" will likely prove illusory.

Accordingly, we believe that further reductions in state spending are needed to keep Ohio's budget in the black and allow for meaningful tax reform. The Buckeye Institute urges renewed focus on spending outside core government services, namely, spending associated with the arts, marketing assistance for Ohio's grape industry, and other examples of earmarks and public spending on private businesses that effectively allows the government to pick "winners and losers" in the marketplace.

My testimony includes an attached copy of The Buckeye Institute's **2017 Piglet Book** for more specific spending-cut recommendations.

Taxes

The Buckeye Institute has long argued that Ohio should eliminate its personal income tax, and Governor Kasich has kept his promise to reduce the burden of the income tax on all Ohio families, most recently with a 6.3 percent reduction in income tax rates in 2015.

In 2016, Ohio's per capital labor income, per capita investment income, and the employed population grew faster than in most Midwest states due, in no small part, to the Administration's tax cuts that also helped Ohio's per capita economic output outperform the national average.

Although we agree with the general direction of Mr. Kasich's tax policy, we differ on a few specifics.

Like the Governor, we want Ohio's small businesses eventually to pay no income tax, but the current small business tax deduction appears to create a great deal of tax shifting and has meant significant declines in revenue. We believe it will prove more sustainable to lower these deductions and give Ohio's tax brackets an across-the-board rate cut. The Senate should explore other areas, such as phasing down the property tax rollback by one or two percent, to offset revenue losses and pay for an across-the-board rate cut. A one percent rollback reduction, for instance, could yield tens of millions in savings over the biennium, and a two percent cut could save over \$100 million.

Currently, the state pays 10 percent of property taxes for all Ohioans, and for those who live in their home the state pays an additional 2.5 percent. Thus the state sets aside more than \$1.8 billion in general revenues each fiscal year to reimburse local governments for local decisions. Since the property tax rollback program was adopted when Ohio began imposing an income tax, the amount spent on the program should be cut as Ohio's income tax declines. The Senate also should consider means testing the rollback beyond our suggested phased-in reduction.

Finally, because Ohio's municipal tax structure remains a daunting labyrinth, especially for smaller businesses, The Buckeye Institute recommends returning to the Governor's proposed municipal income tax reform. Should it remain optional for businesses to file net-profits municipal income taxes, however, we encourage the Senate at least to guarantee that taxpayers do not pay an administrative fee for filing net-profits taxes.

Education

The Senate should retain the basic outline of the current education budget but should *not* increase appropriations beyond those made by the House. We would urge the Senate to return to the Governor's proposed appropriation levels and remove "safe harbor" provisions that unfairly restrict eligibility for EdChoice scholarships.

The House budget rightly embraced the contours of Governor Kasich's education proposal that begins unwinding the "caps" and "guarantees" that distort the Foundation Funding Formula. Money should follow students and *not* just be used as a mechanism for funding the education "system" and its ever-expanding bureaucracy.

The Senate should also eliminate or reform the current "safe harbor" provision that denies parents school-choice options by preventing hundreds of schools across the state from being eligible for EdChoice scholarships.

Medicaid

We think that the Senate should embrace the House budget's language on Medicaid and state innovation waivers-including resubmitting the Healthy Ohio waiver-and add deadlines for submitting those waivers to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Additionally, the Senate should include language that maintains the Administration's flexibility to improve Ohio's health care system.

Ohio's 2015 budget instructed the Kasich Administration to seek a state innovation waiver granting some freedom from onerous regulations under the Affordable Care Act. The new Secretary of HHS has encouraged states to pursue innovation waivers and the Senate should expand on 2015's waiver instructions and encourage Mr. Kasich's Administration to pursue waivers that will lower premiums. The Senate should include a reinsurance component similar to the waiver submitted by Alaska (and touted by HHS) that could reduce insurance premiums for Ohioans.

Some providers are understandably concerned about Governor Kasich's proposal to shift many aged, blind, and disabled Medicaid recipients into managed care. This process should be closely monitored and evaluated, of course, but continued delay will likely mean higher costs and less coordination of care, and we recommend adopting the Governor's proposal in this area.

Criminal Justice

The Buckeye Institute supports the Department of Rehabilitation and Correction's budget proposal dealing with the TCAP program. As we testified before the House, we support policies that would rehabilitate low-level offenders in their communities. The Senate should return to Governor Kasich's proposal or, at the very least, should maintain the proposal in the House budget.

Rehabilitating low-level offenders in the community is twice as effective as state incarceration at one-third the cost, and watering down the TCAP provisions even further would significantly dilute the policy's potency.

Local Government

The Senate should further reduce the Local Government Fund (LGF). The House appropriations call for \$388.1 million in FY18 and \$393.5 million in FY19. The Buckeye Institute has suggested eliminating the LGF entirely, which would save more than \$781 million over the coming biennium. At the very least, we think that the Senate should return to the Governor's proposal and direct LGF dollars to those communities that have the greatest difficulty raising requisite revenues locally.

Separately, the Senate should not increase or make permanent distributions to counties for lost sales tax revenue due to the eliminated Medicaid Managed Care Organization tax. Those tax dollars were windfalls that counties obtained through piggyback sales tax systems. If new funds are needed to pay for local issues, then those dollars should be raised at the local level and not become a Columbus-based subsidy that obscures the true cost of local government from local taxpayers.

Occupational Licensing

To help more Ohioans secure gainful employment, the Senate should eliminate, or at least reduce, state-imposed hurdles and licensing fees strewn throughout the House's budget.

The Senate should also include language from the 131st General Assembly's Senate Bill 329 that would require the state to seek the "least restrictive form of regulation" for occupational licensing. This would clarify Ohio's interest in maintaining public safety without denying people employment prospects and opportunities. This language cleared both chambers of the General Assembly last year, and Governor Kasich's veto concerned SB 329's agency sun-setting provisions and not the "least restrictive form of regulation" language.

Controlling Board Reform

The Senate should build upon the House's effort to reassert legislative power over spending through reasonable reforms to the Controlling Board. The House capped the windfall money that could be obligated by the Controlling Board at \$10 million, and the Senate should maintain the House's cap. The Senate should also eliminate the Controlling Board's authority to raise occupational license fees by up to 50 percent—a roadblock for people

trying to secure well-paying jobs. Alternatively, the Senate should lower the occupational licensing fee cap to 25 percent.

Conclusion

In conclusion, despite economic headwinds and clouds still looming along the horizon, Ohio has improved its prospects for job- and income-growth. As the first green shoots of growth begin to blossom, the biennial budget provides Senators with the perfect opportunity to set a bold course for Ohio's prosperity.

Thank you for your time and attention today. I would be happy to answer any questions that the Committee may have.

###

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From: Springhetti, Blake
Sent: Friday, June 2, 2017 1:29 PM
To: House_All
Subject: Co-Sponsor Request: Reduced Mandated Sick Days for Public Employees
Attachments: Co-Sponsor Request - Reducing Mandated Sick Days for Public Employees.pdf



Representative Derek Merrin
47th District

MEMORANDUM

TO: All House Members
FROM: Representative Derek Merrin
DATE: June 2, 2017
RE: Co-Sponsor Request: Reduced Mandated Sick Days for Public Employees

I will soon introduce legislation to align public employees' sick day allotment with the standard allotment for state public employees.

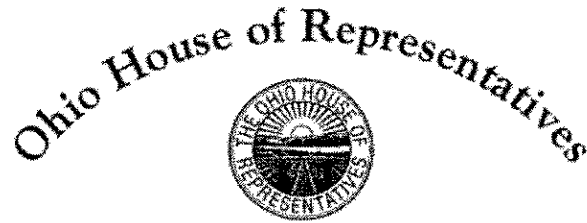
State employees receive 10 sick days per year, while many local government employees receive an excessive 15 sick days per year (3 weeks). This legislation makes 10 sick days per year the standard across the board - impacting county, municipal, civil service township, school district, and university employees. This will help create fairness between state and local government employees. The bill contains a provision that restricts collective bargaining agreements from requiring local governments to provide more than the state mandated number of 10 sick days annually.

By forcing local governments/taxpayers to provide an excessive number of sick days, the state is driving-up local governments' costs. You will be hard pressed to find any private-

sector business that provides 15 sick days annually. Also, government employees receive additional, generous amounts of personal days and vacation leave. The legislature created this excessive mandate and it is time for us to fix it. Please join with me to support a reasonable standard and provide relief to our local governments.

If you would like to co-sponsor this legislation or have any questions, please contact my Legislative Aide, Blake Springhetti, at Blake.Springhetti@ohiohouse.gov or at (614) 466-1731 by **Tuesday, June 13**.

Sincerely,
Derek Merrin



Representative Derek Merrin
47th District

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FROM: Representative Derek Merrin
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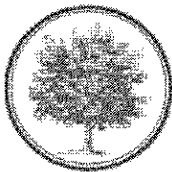
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Sincerely,
Derek Merrin

From: The Buckeye Institute
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To: Adams, Alexandra
Subject: Swampy state budgets need The Buckeye Institute's dry analysis

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Ladies and Gentlemen, I'm guessing that not many of you know that the Bayou state (which was originally dubbed *La Louisiane* in tribute to Louis XIV--King of France from 1643 to 1715) has gotten into a budgetary pickle here in the year 2017 AD.

Fear not.

To help policymakers in Baton Rouge sort out their options, The Buckeye Institute collaborated with our good friends at the Pelican Institute (Louisiana's premier voice for free markets) to conduct a peer reviewed study on a dozen tax policies and proposed changes, including some of Governor John Bel Edward's ill-advised plans.

Buckeye's Economic Research Center (ERC) team created a customized dynamic model of Louisiana's existing economy and then inputted various policy changes to determine which solutions would create the least amount of economic harm to the already struggling families and businesses in Louisiana.

When numbers speak, we listen. Our team of economists and data analysts is second to none and, golly geezers, do they ever get excited about charts and graphs and exploring the validity of their hypotheses with hard numbers. For those of us whose highest math

class was a senior year of honors calculus in high school before we took that wretchedly easy class widely known as "math for liberal arts (a.k.a. political science) majors" in college, these guys are the mad scientists and geniuses who understand complex theorems and derivatives the way I understand my son's excuses for avoiding his homework. In other words, they see through to the truth of the matter at hand.

After finalizing our research, our lead economist Orphe Divounguy, Ph.D., along with Buckeye's president and CEO Robert Alt, flew down to make the case in person and present the results of our comprehensive analysis. These two Buckeye Institute superstars met with policymakers and leaders in the legislature, industry groups, press and media folks, and showed all of them the simulated policy changes through our economic model.

The model determined that eliminating the corporate income tax and replacing it with a revenue neutral sales tax increase would create jobs, grow the economy, and increase tax revenue. Only a Maoist could oppose those exciting outcomes. Approximately two weeks after these meetings, the same legislative leaders with whom our team met soundly defeated the Governor's policy proposals. Three cheers for economic sanity and courageously standing up to bad fiscal policy.

We are pleased to roll out this impactful new report, *Addressing Louisiana's Budget Shortfall: Strategies for Growth*, and show everyone in greater detail what our economic model produced.

"Rather than pursue revenues through increasing the tax burden on citizens, Louisiana would be better served by reducing or eliminating its corporate taxes, and creating incentives for increasing investment, and job creation across the state," said Dr. Orphe Pierre Divounguy, economist with The Buckeye Institute's Economic Research Center and lead author on the report. "Eliminating Louisiana's corporate income and franchise taxes offer the best path for spurring economic growth and eliminating some sales tax exemptions would have the least harmful effect on the state's gross domestic product while still raising additional tax revenue."

I should note here that it has come to our attention that some very dear supporters of ours are not reading all of our reports in full. They are long, yes, but what better way to prepare yourself to refute the one we heard the other day where Nancy Pelosi was speaking to a classroom full of second graders and was asked the awkward question about where jobs come from. Without missing a beat, she answered that there is a stork employed by the government who drops them off in each state every nine months.....

Okay, fine, that was a lame joke, but still, you should read these excellent economic reports that give us all the evidence necessary to push back against the big-government nonsense that surrounds us.

We love you all and thank you kindly for making our work possible to fight unsound economic policies wherever they are--whether here in Columbus or another state in this great nation, so that we do not meanly lose this last best hope of earth.

###

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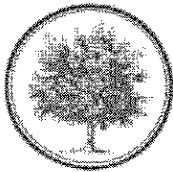
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June 7, 2017

**New Buckeye Institute and Tax Foundation Book
Illustrates That Ohio's Tax System is in Need of Reform**
Ohio Illustrated is a Visual Guide to Taxes and the Economy

Columbus, OH - A new book released today by **The Buckeye Institute** and the **Tax Foundation**, *Ohio Illustrated: A Visual Guide to Taxes and the Economy*, provides a detailed overview of the state's economy and tax code and highlights areas where Ohio's tax system is most in need of reform.

"Ohio's tax code contains too many provisions that hinder its ability to compete economically with other states. *Ohio Illustrated* shows how the state's growing tax burden has resulted in slower economic growth over the past several decades," said Rea S. Hederman Jr., executive vice president at The Buckeye Institute. "This new book shows precisely how tax policy affects families, businesses, and our state's economic development."

Economically, Ohio has recently tracked with the national average for unemployment. However, the state is falling behind in other areas, such as per capita income, where Ohio is lower than the U.S. average and its neighboring states. An aging population and young people moving out of the state are shrinking Ohio's workforce. To help the state bounce back, Ohio policymakers need to improve its uncompetitive tax code to make the state a more attractive place to do business.

"Ohio's tax code is needlessly complex and burdensome. With one of the worst municipal income tax systems in the country, the compliance cost for many taxpayers is higher than their actual tax liability," said Scott Drenkard, director of state projects at the Tax Foundation. "Additionally, the state's commercial activities tax is one of the most harmful tax types, leading to tax pyramiding and higher prices for consumers."

Key findings in the book:

- **Ohio has one of the worst business tax climates in the country:** The Tax Foundation's *State Business Tax Climate Index* ranks states by their tax structure, and Ohio's needless tax complexity helps to drive its rank down to 45th in the country.
- **Ohio's municipal tax is a mess and in need of reform:** Both The Buckeye Institute and the Tax Foundation have testified on this issue and both agree that Governor Kasich's proposal in his FY 2018-2019 budget was a move in the right direction. Ohio has a complex web of local income taxes that makes the state's personal income tax one of worst in the country. Hundreds of municipalities and school districts impose local income taxes based on both where taxpayers work and where they live. Businesses face additional compliance costs by having to manage tax withholdings. Some parts of Ohio have top combined marginal tax rates of approximately nine percent, similar to those of high tax states like New Jersey and New York.
- **Economically detrimental gross receipts tax:** Ohio is one of only five states that imposes a gross receipts tax (also known as a commercial activities tax or CAT), which means taxes are levied at each stage of production, not just on final consumption. This hidden tax leads to higher consumer prices, lower wages, and fewer job opportunities as the tax permeates the production cycle. This tax also leads to vastly different effective rates between different industries in Ohio.

To reform Ohio's tax system, state policymakers need to consider not only tax burdens, but also tax fairness. The combination of Ohio's CAT and the state's administratively complex local income taxes causes significant burdens on the economy. This timely new book illustrates with data, charts, and graphs how lawmakers in Ohio could improve the state's business climate by collecting tax dollars in a more efficient, fair, transparent, and competitive manner.

###

Since its founding in 1989, The Buckeye Institute has served as Ohio's leading free-market public policy think. Through its state-of-the-art Economic Research Center, The Buckeye Institute provides legislatures, governors, state think tanks, and policy experts the data, analysis, and dynamic modeling necessary to understand the impact of various policy proposals on human behavior and economic indicators at the state level. The Buckeye Institute's nationally-recognized research includes studies on government spending and transparency, health care, labor, energy, education, legal, and taxation reforms.

The Tax Foundation is the nation's leading independent tax policy research organization. Since 1937, its research, analysis, and experts have informed smarter tax policy at the federal, state, and local levels. Its Center for State Tax Policy uses research to foster competition among the states and advises policymakers on how to improve their tax systems.



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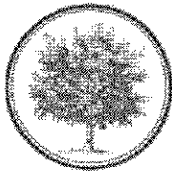
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Subject: ICYMI: Buckeye's Rea Hederman in *The Hill* looking at giving states more flexibility to change Medicaid

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After yesterday's news of Anthem pulling out of Ohio's exchanges, our Rea Hederman has a timely piece in *The Hill* looking at the need to give states more flexibility to, "change Medicaid overall and think of how to deliver the best care, to the most patients for the best price."

You can follow Rea on Twitter [@ReaHedermanJr](#).

States need freedom to improve health for Medicaid recipients

The Hill

By Rea S. Hederman Jr.

June 7, 2017

As Congress continues its work on replacing the Affordable Care Act (ACA), Ohio leaders like Governor John Kasich and Senator Robert Portman are rightly concerned about the impact these changes will have on Medicaid recipients, especially those who received Medicaid through the ACA expansion. However, two critical facts are missing from the current debate.

First, Medicaid is a substandard health care system and we have to find a way to transition people into insurance that offers them better care. Second, Medicaid is not fiscally sustainable at either the state or federal level. No one, on either side of the political divide, wants people to be uninsured, but glossing over these two critical facts won't help solve the real problems Medicaid faces and it won't provide people with quality healthcare.

Studies have shown that people who are on Medicaid don't have better healthcare outcomes when compared to someone without Medicaid. In other words, people who receive Medicaid spend more money on healthcare but have the same risk of heart attacks and had the same blood pressure levels.

There are numerous reasons for this. One problem is, Medicaid reimburses doctors and hospitals at a lower rate than private coverage, so recipients have trouble finding doctors who take Medicaid. Doctors who do take Medicaid often have less autonomy in deciding how to treat their patients. Medicaid recipients are more likely to visit emergency rooms rather than seeking more effective care with a primary care physician.

Given the poor quality of care, why would we want to put more people on Medicaid? The focus shouldn't be on protecting a system that has a mixed record of providing healthcare, but instead on finding solutions that offer better care to enrollees. We need to change Medicaid overall and think of how to deliver the best care, to the most patients for the best price.

Here in Ohio, the Ohio Department of Medicaid recognizes the need to offer quality healthcare and is actively piloting programs to deliver better care to Medicaid recipients. The problem is, there is only so much improvement that can be made without Washington lifting some of its burdensome regulations.

Fortunately, federal officials want to make it easier to grant Medicaid waivers that would allow states more flexibility to innovate in their Medicaid programs. Current proposals from the Ohio House would have Ohio seek a waiver to help Medicaid recipients save more for healthcare and transition to real health insurance. This Healthy Ohio plan is based on Healthy Indiana, which is working well for our westerly neighbor.

Now back to the sustainability of Medicaid. As with all taxpayer funded programs, government officials must ensure that money is being spent wisely and efficiently, and that the program achieves its goals. Medicaid fails in all three of these.

In Ohio, we spend a quarter of our state budget on Medicaid, and it is only growing. That means less money for education, roads, prisons, and a host of other government services. The good news is, the reforms I have mentioned will go a long way to improving healthcare delivery and will help reign in the unsustainable costs of Medicaid.

Modern day presidents from Ronald Reagan to Barack Obama have proposed budgets that reduce federal funding to Medicaid and increase the state's share. Medicaid costs are only growing, and the federal government has made clear they will pay less in the future. If Medicaid is not reformed, the only other option is spiraling tax increases on Ohioans. That isn't good for Ohio's families and won't improve the quality of care people get through Medicaid.

Ignoring the problems in the current Medicaid system will only continue to relegate people to poor quality healthcare at unsustainable costs. But we have a real opportunity to actively create a new Medicaid program. In doing so, Ohio can balance fiscal responsibility and offer better care to those most in need.

Rea S. Hederman Jr. is executive vice president and chief operating officer of The Buckeye Institute, a think tank promoting free market principles, and is an expert in healthcare policy.

###

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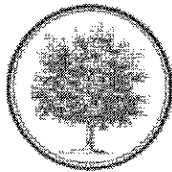
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From: The Buckeye Institute
Sent: Monday, June 12, 2017 11:46 AM
To: Adams, Alexandra
Subject: ICYMI: Dispatch Editorial Cites Buckeye Piglet Book as Guide to Cut Spending

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THE BUCKEYE INSTITUTE

Ohio legislators are in the midst of a contentious biennial budget discussion involving the need to cut at least \$800 million to address projected revenue shortfalls.

The Buckeye Institute previously released our **Piglet Book** to help guide those conversations, and prior to the Ohio Senate releasing its version of the budget, *The Columbus Dispatch*--published an editorial citing the Piglet Book and imploring legislators to cut the pork.

The Columbus Dispatch

'Piglet Book' suggests savings in state budget

The Columbus Dispatch

The Editorial Board

June 12, 2017

It's nose-in-the-trough time again at the Ohio Statehouse. While schools, prisons and Medicaid are major areas of spending in the two-year budget being hammered out in the Senate, other suggested appropriations are better examples of pork than public policy.

To help lawmakers focus on essential government services and responsibilities, the nonpartisan Buckeye Institute has again produced its "Ohio Piglet Book."

"The following items that are recommended for elimination are not necessarily bad things in general," report author, Greg R. Lawson writes in the 2017 edition by the free-market think tank. "However, they are not appropriate use of state resources."

The items singled out by the institute come from Gov. John Kasich's proposed budget and then were massaged in the House. How the final appropriations will look in the Senate by the end of this month is anyone's guess. It's politics. But it's worth legislators heeding the Buckeye Institute's general thrust when it comes to spending Ohioans' hard-earned loot: Focus on core government duties, curtail government growth, encourage private-sector support and end corporate welfare - distributing government dollars to favored companies, disadvantaging competitors.

Take the \$2.4 million collected on behalf of Ohio-grown wine grapes. Every gallon of wine sold in Ohio, whether it comes from Lake Erie or California, is subject to a total of a nickel-per-gallon excise tax to subsidize a marketing program benefiting Ohio wine producers. Why should consumers foot the bill for Ohio wines? Why not impose an excise tax on hamburgers, to help Wendy's compete against McDonald's? Ohio lawmakers should put a cork in this spending.

Another area in which the research group suggests not spending tax dollars is for the Ohioana Library. Intense lobbying has been going on to spare this private, nonprofit organization from the budget ax; Kasich increased its operating funding from \$160,000 to \$180,000, which the House gutted entirely when it got its hands on the budget. (The library's rent subsidy remains.) The library curates a collection of Ohio authors and produces the Ohioana Book festival, among other things.

But tough budget decisions have to be made. The state needs to chop more than \$800 million from the budget, given falling income-tax revenues. This means prioritizing funding. The Ohioana Library already raises a large chunk of its budget from grants,

donors and corporate sponsors. It's a wonderful asset, and it should be able to make a case for philanthropists to take over for taxpayers.

Yes, the library's costs are relatively small potatoes compared with the tens of billions Ohio spends each year, but pennies add up to dollars.

Likewise the Buckeye Institute cites other artistic and cultural endeavors it considers "ripe for termination." Among these is \$25.9 million in biennial state subsidies for the Ohio Arts Council, which the House trimmed to \$25.5 million. "The government should not be the arbiter of culture," it says, "Ohioans can evaluate for themselves which artists to patronize without the government's guidance."

Another target identified is \$722,900 over the two-year budget to support regulating Ohio Auctioneers through state licensing, which the institute says forces Ohioans to ask the state "Mother may I?" and seek government permission to work in their chosen field. "It is difficult to envision," the Institute writes, "what public safety issue could be at stake with respect to auctioneers."

The legislature should make sure that needless, burdensome and other nonessential government spending is going, going, gone.

###

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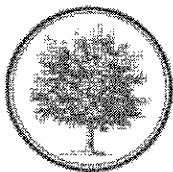
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THE BUCKEYE INSTITUTE

Contact: Lisa Gates, Vice President of Comms

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June 12, 2017

(614) 224-3255 or Lisa@BuckeyeInstitute.org

Buckeye Institute Experts Weigh-In on Senate Version of Ohio's Budget

Columbus, OH - The Ohio Senate announced its version of the biennial budget today and experts from **The Buckeye Institute** issued their reactions.

Spending and Taxes

"The Buckeye Institute is pleased with some of the additional positive steps made by the Ohio Senate in their first crack at the state budget," said **Greg R. Lawson**, research fellow at The Buckeye Institute. "Additional agency spending reductions, the elimination of some earmarks, and lower Medicaid appropriations are all moves in the right direction. Of course, there remain plenty of areas that could use further trimming to create an even more sustainable budget, especially if revenues continue to lag."

"We applaud the Senate's commitment to maintain previous tax cuts and reforms, which are critical if Ohio is going to continue seeing economic growth, said **Orphe Divounguy**,

Ph.D., the lead economist at The Buckeye Institute's **Economic Research Center**. "In 2016, Ohio's per capita real gross domestic product grew faster than all neighboring states, second only to Michigan, according to the **Bureau of Economic Analysis**. To maintain this trend and ensure that the positive economic benefits of tax cuts are realized, the state needs to continue to pursue income tax reductions across all income tax brackets instead of targeted tax deductions and credits."

Criminal Justice Reform

"We commend the Senate for retaining the **Target Community Alternatives to Prison** (TCAP) program in the budget," said **Daniel J. Dew**, criminal justice fellow at The Buckeye Institute's **Legal Center**. "Although the program will be voluntary for much of the state, we anticipate counties will quickly see the benefits and increased public safety that will come from community-based rehabilitation for low-level offenders."

Municipal Tax Reform

"We are pleased to see an opt-in for businesses to file a single municipal income tax return," said Lawson. "As our **recent report**, released in conjunction with the **Tax Foundation**, said, Ohio's municipal tax is a mess and in need of reform. Ohio's complex web of local income taxes makes the state's personal income tax one of worst in the country with hundreds of municipalities and school districts imposing local income taxes based on where taxpayers work and where they live. Ohio's system is so burdensome that some areas have top combined marginal tax rates of more than nine percent, similar to high tax states such as New Jersey and New York."

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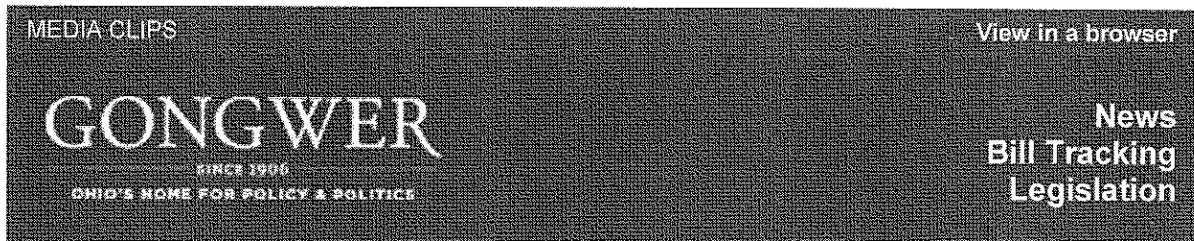
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Ohio agency granted adjustments to no-bid contract process (Associated Press, 6/13/2017)

Ohio board to online charter school: Pay back disputed \$60M (Associated Press, 6/13/2017)

Ohio grants Intralot unbid \$71M lottery contract, extensions (Associated Press, 6/13/2017)

Senate budget closes \$1B gap, adds \$6M for opioid crisis (Associated Press, 6/13/2017)

This Ohio paper endorsed Trump. And now? (Cincinnati Enquirer, 6/13/2017)

Would your school lose or gain money under Senate GOP plan? (Cincinnati Enquirer, 6/13/2017)

Americans for Prosperity targets Sen. Sherrod Brown in new digital ad campaign (Cleveland Plain Dealer, 6/13/2017)

No more art, music and gym tests just to grade teachers? How Ohio could change testing under new proposal (Cleveland Plain Dealer, 6/13/2017)

Ohio Senate budget plan seeks deeper cuts: Ohio Politics Roundup (Cleveland Plain Dealer, 6/13/2017)

President Donald Trump nominates Cleveland lawyer Justin Herdman to be new U.S. attorney (Cleveland Plain Dealer, 6/13/2017)

State agencies, Medicaid take brunt of \$1 billion budget cut proposed by Senate GOP (Cleveland Plain Dealer, 6/13/2017)

State superintendent proposes cuts in Ohio's state tests (Cleveland Plain Dealer, 6/13/2017)

ECOT ordered to repay \$60 million for inflating attendance (Columbus Dispatch, 6/13/2017)

Justices uphold Ohio commercial tax (Columbus Dispatch, 6/13/2017)

Lawmakers OK new state contracting rules requiring competition (Columbus Dispatch, 6/13/2017)

Husted announces statewide campaign operations (Dayton Daily News, 6/13/2017)

Ohio Senate leaders say state facing \$1B budget gap (Dayton Daily News, 6/13/2017)

Ohio wins Supreme Court case on business tax (Dayton Daily News, 6/13/2017)

Ohio Senate cuts lead plan from budget (Toledo Blade, 6/13/2017)

EDITORIALS

Will Ohio close its 'rent gap'? (Akron Beacon Journal, 6/13/2017)

Talk it out: Should low-level drug dealers do time in prison? (Cleveland Plain Dealer, 6/13/2017)

Editorial: Protect kids from 'silent' poison (Columbus Dispatch, 6/13/2017)

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From: Lisa Gates

Sent: Tuesday, June 13, 2017 12:15 PM

Subject: ICYMI: Greg Lawson has an opinion piece looking at the benefits of ESAs

Following on the report *Education Savings Accounts: Expanding Education Options for Ohio* he co-authored with Lindsey Burke, Greg Lawson, the research fellow at Buckeye, has a piece on ESAs and their benefits to Ohio's families.

Education savings accounts: The future of school choice in Ohio

Thomas B. Fordham Institute's Ohio Gadfly Daily

By Greg R. Lawson

June 13, 2017

The Buckeye Institute in Ohio recently released *Education Savings Accounts: Expanding Education Options for Ohio*, a report co-authored with the Heritage Foundation's school choice expert Lindsey Burke, which explains how Education Savings Accounts (ESA) will build upon Ohio's already successful voucher and scholarship programs. Adopting a robust ESA program would propel Ohio's outdated public education system into the 21st century, and make it nimble enough to navigate the needs of today's students.

ESAs take the next step toward putting parents in charge of their child's education. In envisioning education in the 21st century, parents—not bureaucrats—are primarily responsible for meeting the educational needs of students. And ESAs will help Ohio realize that vision.

For more than a century, an "Industrial Age" model of mass learning and limited flexibility has dominated the public education paradigm. This model too often ignores the individual needs, differences, skills, and interests of the children it purports to instruct. By embracing a more flexible and personalized approach to learning, ESAs will help Ohio transition into the new "Information Age"—empowering consumers, parents, children, and taxpayers to customize education to better meet student and community needs.

Ohio has helped lead the nation's school choice movement, and already boasts strong charter schools and five different voucher programs that allow parents to seek education options to best meet their students' individual needs. Adding a healthy ESA program simply builds on this success by giving families more purchasing

power to customize their child's education. Even beyond the flexibility of Ohio's voucher programs, ESAs would present parents with an à la carte menu of education products and services, including textbooks, tutors, online classes, private school tuition, and saving for college.

An Ohio ESA program could function in a variety of ways, but the keys to its success will always be flexibility for students and families, and minimizing bureaucratic intervention.

In broad strokes, an ESA program deposits an established base dollar amount into a participating family's account, and would allow for more funds to be added according to a formula that factors relevant demographic criteria and other student needs. Like Ohio's vouchers, the base amount should hew closely to the state's guaranteed per-student funding. ESA funds would be dispersed on a periodic basis after parents submit receipts for eligible education expenses. ESA funds from the state would not be taxable income, and parents should be permitted to supplement their ESA funds with personal revenue and to rollover ESA funds from year-to-year in order to enhance market power and increase the supply and demand for new educational products.

Ohio, of course, uses a complex school funding formula and an elaborate mechanism of local and state taxes that would make Rube Goldberg proud. Thus, any ESA funding formula will need to account for those complexities to ensure that the state allocates adequate resources.

Like any state considering ESAs, Ohio should also look to the five successful ESA programs already up and running in Arizona, Florida, Mississippi, Nevada, and Tennessee. The programs in Florida, Mississippi, and Tennessee are currently only available to certain special needs students, but Arizona and Nevada have created effectively universal ESAs for their students.

In 2011, Arizona created the first ESA program with its Empowerment Scholarship Accounts for children with special needs. The program has been a resounding success, with **70 percent of survey respondents** indicating that they were very satisfied with their child's educational experience and Arizona Governor Doug Ducey signing legislation this year to expand the ESAs into a near universal program.

Nevada was first to adopt universal ESAs in 2015, but litigation over the state's chosen funding stream has delayed its implementation.

Already, Ohio policymakers appear keen to join this revolutionary school choice trend. Two companion bills, **Senate Bill 85** (sponsored by Senator Matt Huffman)

and **House Bill 200** (sponsored by Representative Kyle Koehler), would modify Ohio's existing non-special needs vouchers by creating a single Opportunity Scholarship. These would closely mirror ESAs and would be available to eligible students based upon a sliding income scale, and they offer Ohio a good place to start.

Nothing succeeds like success. As policymakers and the public learn of ESA successes around the country, demand will continue to grow for more school choice, more parent empowerment, and more innovative and effective ways to educate our students. School choice has always recognized that a traditional one-size-fits-all public education does not meet the individualized and nuanced needs of students and their families. ESAs take the next logical step away from a bureaucratic education system that proves increasingly outmoded and unable to satisfy the demands of the new century.

*Greg R. Lawson is a research fellow at **The Buckeye Institute** in Ohio and an expert in school choice.*

Lisa A. Gates

Vice President of Communications

The Buckeye Institute

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From: Springhetti, Blake
Sent: Tuesday, June 13, 2017 2:32 PM
To: House_All
Subject: EXTENDED: Co-Sponsor Request: Reduced Mandated Sick Days for Public Employees
Attachments: Co-Sponsor Request - Reducing Mandated Sick Days for Public Employees.pdf

The deadline to co-sponsor has been extended to **Tuesday, June 20 at 5pm!**



Representative Derek Merrin
47th District

MEMORANDUM

TO: All House Members
FROM: Representative Derek Merrin
DATE: June 13, 2017
RE: **EXTENDED: Co-Sponsor Request: Reduced Mandated Sick Days for Public Employees**

I will soon introduce legislation to align public employees' sick day allotment with the standard allotment for state public employees.

State employees receive 10 sick days per year, while many local government employees receive an excessive 15 sick days per year (3 weeks). This legislation makes 10 sick days per year the standard across the board - impacting county, municipal, civil service township, school district, and university employees. This will help create fairness between state and

local government employees. The bill contains a provision that restricts collective bargaining agreements from requiring local governments to provide more than the state mandated number of 10 sick days annually.

By forcing local governments/taxpayers to provide an excessive number of sick days, the state is driving-up local governments' costs. You will be hard pressed to find any private-sector business that provides 15 sick days annually. Also, government employees receive additional, generous amounts of personal days and vacation leave. The legislature created this excessive mandate and it is time for us to fix it. Please join with me to support a reasonable standard and provide relief to our local governments.

If you would like to co-sponsor this legislation or have any questions, please contact my Legislative Aide, Blake Springhetti, at Blake.Springhetti@ohiohouse.gov or at (614) 466-1731 by **Tuesday, June 20 at 5pm.**

Sincerely,
Derek Merrin

Ohio House of Representatives



Representative Derek Merrin
47th District

MEMORANDUM

TO: All House Members
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DATE: June 13, 2017
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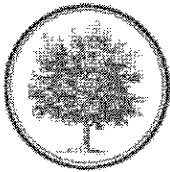
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Sincerely,
Derek Merrin

From: The Buckeye Institute
Sent: Wednesday, June 14, 2017 5:59 PM
To: Adams, Alexandra
Subject: At White House, The Buckeye Institute and Ohio Senate President Obhof
Call for Greater Flexibility for the States on Health Care Reforms

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 14, 2017

At White House, The Buckeye Institute and Ohio Senate President Obhof Call for Greater Flexibility for the States on Health Care Reforms

Columbus, OH - The Buckeye Institute, along with Ohio's Senate President Larry Obhof, attended a White House meeting on Wednesday that included legislative leaders from several states as well as nationally-recognized health care policy experts to discuss the concerns and needs of the states on health care reform.

Ohio's delegation to the meeting included Senator Obhof and Buckeye's own Executive Vice President Rea S. Hederman Jr. who were there to request more flexibility from Washington for the states to have more control over managing their own health care. Similar requests had previously been blocked by the Obama administration.

"Last week, Anthem left 20 Ohio counties without an insurer on the private market. If Obamacare actually worked as promised, insurance companies would not be abandoning

these markets. Providing greater flexibility for each state to fix health care for its own population is an idea whose time has indisputably come," said Hederman, a nationally-recognized health care policy expert. "Senator Obhof has provided tremendous leadership on this issue in Ohio by using the state budget to require Ohio to seek an innovation waiver, and The Buckeye Institute was honored to join him in representing Ohio at the White House."

Senator Obhof and The Buckeye Institute have both urged the Department of Health and Human Services to grant Ohio a state innovation 1332 waiver, which would enable Ohio to eliminate the individual and employer mandates.

Hederman recently authored an article in *The Hill* where he reminded readers that no one wants anyone to be uninsured, "but glossing over the problems with health care reform and Medicaid won't provide people with quality health care," said Hederman. "Buckeye is proud to be leading the way in calling for bold action from the states in seeking waivers for Medicaid and state innovation and in calling for more flexibility to implement solutions for our citizens."

###

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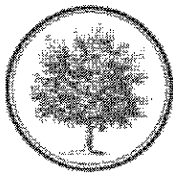
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Subject: Buckeye's Criminal Justice Expert Daniel Dew Praises Work of Criminal Justice Recodification Committee

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June 15, 2017

(614) 224-3255 or Lisa@BuckeyeInstitute.org

Buckeye's Criminal Justice Expert Daniel Dew Praises Work of Criminal Justice Recodification Committee

Columbus, OH - The Criminal Justice Recodification Committee released its final report today outlining recommendations to the Ohio General Assembly on how to fix Ohio's criminal code. The report includes recommendations on sentencing reform, drug law reform, and policies that can assist former offenders on their journey to stay on the straight and narrow.

A leader in the area of criminal justice reform, The Buckeye Institute's Daniel J. Dew worked with the committee's chairman, Judge Fred Pepple, and his staff to provide research and support on key reforms. Dew said of the committee's work, "After decades of piecemeal legislation, the Ohio criminal code is bloated, inconsistent, and difficult to understand - even for lawyers. The Recodification Committee was given the herculean task

of fixing it. A little more than two years and nearly 4,000 pages later, the committee has released its final report and we applaud each member for their effort and final product."

The committee began its work in May 2015, which consisted of well-respected practitioners from around the state, including judges, prosecutors, criminal defense attorneys, law enforcement officers, and prison officials. Some of the report's most notable recommendations are:

- Criminal intent standards were added and strengthened to ensure criminal laws only capture bad actors;
- Many mandatory minimum penalties that hinder a judge's ability to ensure the punishment fits the crime were eliminated; and
- Twenty-six sections of Title 29 were eliminated or merged for convenience or redundancy.

"Lots of experience and brain power went into this report," said Dew. "And we hope policymakers will use it to make Ohio safer and more just."

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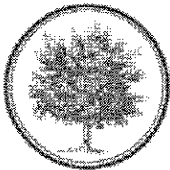
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THE BUCKEYE INSTITUTE

Overview of First Senate Changes to Ohio's Budget

By Greg R. Lawson
June 19, 2017

On June 12, the Ohio Senate unveiled its initial version of the state's biennial operating budget, improving upon the House of Representatives' version, **House Bill 49**. The Senate's solid first effort goes further than the House in some key areas-including administrative agency cuts, Medicaid reductions, municipal tax reform, criminal justice, and healthcare-but more work remains to be done, especially with recurring revenue shortfalls looming on the horizon.

In our **initial comments on the Senate version** of the budget we commended the Senate for their work, but highlighted that "there remain[ed] plenty of areas that could use further trimming to create an even more sustainable budget, especially if revenues continue to lag."

With that in mind, we offer the following observations as the Senate continues its budget deliberations.

Spending

The Senate draft reduces the House's total appropriations over the biennium by \$366 million. With appropriations of \$60.7 billion in FY18 and \$61.9 billion in FY19, state spending would dip below actual FY16 spending and projected FY17 spending. The Senate exceeds the House's General Revenue Funds (GRF) cuts by an additional \$423 million, wisely eliminating a fair number of earmarks. Many of the Senate's proposed spending reductions are real-not illusory accounting gimmicks-and demonstrate more progress toward fiscal responsibility than we often see in the budget process.

Some of the Senate's cost-savings are unlikely to materialize fully, particularly the proposed Medicaid cuts, but we applaud both chambers for requiring the Kasich Administration to obtain Controlling Board approval for expanded Medicaid spending. In addition, we remain encouraged that the Board's approval is contingent upon the Administration seeking federal Medicaid reform waivers.

In addition to finding more administrative savings within state agencies, the Senate will also claw back millions of unspent dollars scattered throughout various line items throughout the budget. Some of the claw-backs may prove one-time savings that cannot be repeated in subsequent years, but the Senate's effort are appreciated nonetheless.

The Senate slashes the **Department of Education's** budget by \$142.6 million over two fiscal years, but retains the House's increases in foundation funding. Even more significantly, the Senate substantially revises the school funding formula in order to prevent most school districts, even those with significant enrollment declines, from receiving less funding. The revised funding formula will be paid for in part by lowering the caps on faster growing districts.

Taking a few pages out of our **Piglet Book**, the Senate version reduces appropriations for several line items, including the "Small Business and Export Assistance" by nearly \$1.4 million over two years.

And finally, the Senate wisely retains reforms that will limit the Controlling Board's authority over unexpected federal windfalls, and will prevent the Board from circumventing the legislature.

Taxes

We applaud both chambers for maintaining previous tax cuts and reforms that are now beginning to deliver for Ohio. According to the **Bureau of Economic Analysis**, Ohio's economy grew faster in 2016 than each of our neighbor states except Michigan. Despite this positive sign, several examples illustrate the work that remains to be done to make the tax code as simple and fair as possible for Ohio's families and businesses.

Ohio's tax code remains riddled with complex deductions and special exemptions that encourage individuals and businesses to restructure their transactions to gain tax benefits. Although tax deductions may support worthy causes, such as college savings and disability-expense accounts, reducing the size and number of deductions will make Ohio's tax code more efficient, more fair, and may ultimately help Ohio transition from an income tax to a pro-growth consumption tax state.

Thus, we think that the Senate's proposal which doubles the tax deductions available for college savings plans and disability-expense savings accounts from \$2,000 to \$4,000 per beneficiary takes a step in the wrong direction. We have similar concerns about special tax treatments that favor only certain sectors and industries, such as the "Rural Jobs Act," which unfairly benefits insurance companies and financial institutions that invest in rural and "high growth" funds. Although spurring rural job-growth is a noble cause, we think it unlikely that these tax expenditures will succeed, and all businesses and families would see greater benefits with sustainable across-the-board tax cuts.

Instead of adding or expanding special tax exemptions, policymakers should look to reduce and eliminate deductions in order to finance an across-the-board income tax cut. Reducing taxes across all tax brackets would continue to leverage the state's recent economic gains and have a far greater impact on rural Ohio than special-interest tax breaks.

Municipal Income Tax

The Senate took a positive step that will allow businesses to file a single tax return, while not shifting administrative fees to taxpayers. This provision will save Ohio businesses from some of the administrative headaches associated with Ohio's byzantine municipal income tax. Much more reform is needed, of course, but it is good to see a strong effort to fix a broken system that consistently hurts Ohioans.

Medicaid

The Senate has yet to embrace the Governor Kasich's proposal to shift certain Medicaid populations, particularly the more expensive Aged, Blind, and Disabled category, into managed care in order to save money while providing better care. However, at least the Senate's budget continues reforming Medicaid and makes some progress reining in

Ohio's fiscal "Pac-Man" by cutting more than \$100 million from the **Department of Medicaid** over FY18 and FY19.

The Senate's intentional *underfunding* of Medicaid will help maintain legal guardrails on the program and encourage **Healthy Ohio** and other **significant reforms** through state innovation or 1332 waivers. As noted, the current Senate budget also wisely retains House provisions concerning Medicaid and the Controlling Board's required authorization for expansion spending. These policies will likely reduce Medicaid costs and make it easier for Medicaid expansion recipients to move into affordable private insurance coverage.

Education

The Senate adopts some of the Administration's proposal to begin shifting Ohio's school funding formula away from guarantees and caps. Unfortunately, the Senate lowers the caps, and thus slows the state's transition away from guarantees.

The caps and guarantees in Ohio's education funding distort the Foundation Funding Formula (the designated amount spent on each public-school student from the General Revenue Fund and lottery profits). Guarantees allow districts with declining enrollment to maintain previous funding levels despite serving fewer students, and caps prevent districts with growing enrollment levels from receiving the formula's full amount. We think more robust efforts should be pursued through the budget process to resolve this systemic issue.

We would also encourage policymakers to eliminate "safe harbors" for many school buildings. The legal safe harbor provisions effectively limit or prevent many students from receiving EdChoice scholarships as hundreds of buildings that should be eligible for those scholarships are never added to the eligibility list.

Criminal Justice

We commend the Senate for retaining the **Target Community Alternatives to Prison (TCAP)** program. Although the program will be voluntary for much of the state under the Senate's budget, counties will quickly join the program as they see the benefits to public safety that come from community-based rehabilitation for low-level offenders.

Local Government

The Senate tweaks the distribution of the Local Government Fund to help various programs battling Ohio's opiate addiction crisis, and also fine-tunes the formula for the Public Library Fund to receive an additional \$9 million in GRF over the biennium.

The Buckeye Institute recommends phasing out the LGF altogether or at least implementing the Governor's proposal to better target the LGF to those local governments that have limited capacities to raise operational funds.

Conclusion

The Ohio Senate deserves credit for the positive steps they have taken with first iteration of the budget, especially in light of reduced revenues. However, now is not the time to rest. The Buckeye Institute still recommends additional reductions, highlighted in our **Piglet Book**, to further improve Ohio's fiscal situation and appropriately balance state priorities.

Greg R. Lawson is the research fellow at The Buckeye Institute.

###

Founded in 1989, The Buckeye Institute is an independent research and educational institution - a think tank - whose mission is to advance free-market public policy in the states.

The Buckeye Institute is a non-partisan, non-profit, and tax-exempt organization, as defined by section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue code. As such, it relies on support from individuals, corporations, and foundations that share a commitment to individual liberty, free enterprise, personal responsibility, and limited government. The Buckeye Institute does not seek or accept government funding.



The Buckeye Institute, 88 East Broad Street,
Suite 1120, Columbus, OH 43215

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Sent by info@buckeyeinstitute.org

From: Lisa Gates

Sent: Monday, June 19, 2017 9:57 AM

Subject: ICYMI: Buckeye's Greg Lawson's op-ed in the Dispatch "Ohio needs to simplify convoluted tax system"

Buckeye's Greg Lawson had a piece in yesterday's Columbus Dispatch looking at Ohio convoluted local tax system saying, "Ohio hosts the absolute worst municipal income tax in the entire nation."

Ohio needs to simplify convoluted tax system

The Columbus Dispatch

By Greg R. Lawson

June 18, 2017

Winston Churchill once wrote, "We contend that for a nation to try to tax itself into prosperity is like a man standing in a bucket and trying to lift himself up by the handle."

There is great wisdom in Sir Winston's statement. Fortunately, Ohio policymakers have largely embraced this wisdom over the last decade with state tax reforms that have positively impacted Ohio's economy. However, much more is needed to keep Ohio moving forward, including broader reforms to Ohio's local tax structure.

To help policymakers and everyday Ohioans better understand Ohio's taxes, The Buckeye Institute recently joined with the Tax Foundation to publish a visual guide to Ohio's taxes and economy, "Ohio Illustrated." The book highlights areas where policymakers have made improvements to Ohio's job and economic climate and areas where work remains.

One area where Ohio has seen improvement is reducing the state personal income tax, a policy that is critical for long-term economic growth and one that is paying off. Data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis shows that Ohio's economy grew faster in 2016 than its neighboring states, second only to Michigan, proof that these policies are having a positive impact.

Unfortunately, while the state has been moving in the right direction, local taxes continue to be a particular thorn in Ohio's side.

Ohio hosts the absolute worst municipal income tax in the entire nation. Only 17 states levy local income taxes and of those, Ohio has second-highest effective rate, which is layered onto the state income tax.

If you happen to live in one of the more than 200 jurisdictions that don't offer a full credit for the taxes paid where you work and a school district with an income tax, your combined state and local income tax rate could easily be more than 9 percent. That is close to what residents of high-tax states like New York and New Jersey pay.

This means less money in the pockets of many Ohio families. For example, if someone works in Columbus and lives in Powell, they will pay 3 percent of their income in local taxes on top of their state rate. This is because Powell only offers a .25 percent credit on their .75 percent rate. This is then added to Columbus' 2.5 percent rate. Take the same situation for a Westerville resident and he or she will pay only 2.5 percent to Columbus since Westerville offers a full credit to their residents on taxes paid to where they work.

Confusing, isn't it? In essence, the first resident is unfairly double taxed, while the second is not. Even worse, both of those taxpayers had no vote on the rate they pay to Columbus since they don't live there. I seem to recall a special party in Boston over the issue of taxation without representation.

Even worse, the complexity of filing in multiple jurisdictions means hours of effort to do nothing more than merely comply with local tax. It is common for contractors that work in numerous different cities to have to file 20, 30, or even 40 different tax returns. No other state has localities that make their taxpayers run through this kind of obstacle course and this should change.

Recognizing this burden, the Kasich administration and the General Assembly are close to implementing a positive reform that will ease some of this hardship for Ohio's small businesses. A provision in the current version of the state budget will allow businesses to file a single return through the state and cut through much of the complexity. This is a positive step, albeit a small one.

While keeping state and local taxes low and broad-based is key to ensuring Ohio's continued economic growth, it is important that lawmakers avoid favoring any specific groups of businesses over others through an ever-expanding list of tax credits and deductions. Ohio's priority should be to create more jobs and grow the economy and this means making our overall tax system simpler and fairer for all Ohioans. We should continue to embrace Sir Winston's wisdom and make sure that we don't become like the man standing in a bucket who tries to lift himself up by the handle.

Greg R. Lawson is the research fellow at The Buckeye Institute.

Lisa A. Gates

Vice President of Communications

The Buckeye Institute

88 East Broad Street, Suite 1120 | Columbus, Ohio 43215

(614) 224-3255 | BuckeyeInstitute.org

From: Miller, Brad
Sent: Monday, June 19, 2017 10:01 AM
To: Adams, Alexandra
Subject: wir



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Majority Communications Department

GOP Week in Review

6/12/17 – 6/18/17

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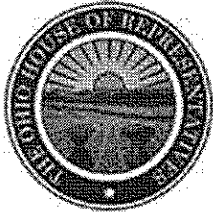
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Brad Miller

Deputy Communications Director / Press Secretary
Office of Speaker Clifford Rosenberger
Ohio House of Representatives
(614) 466-8759

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Sent: Monday, June 19, 2017 10:57 AM
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Subject: RE: ALERT: Week in Review (Sending @ 2)

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From: Miller, Brad
Sent: Monday, June 19, 2017 11:05 AM
To: Adams, Alexandra <Alexandra.Adams@ohiohouse.gov>; Best, Carolyn <Carolyn.Best@ohiohouse.gov>; Westlake, Libby <Libby.Westlake@ohiohouse.gov>; Slack, Cora <Cora.Slack@ohiohouse.gov>; Cho, Joy <Joy.Cho@ohiohouse.gov>
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Sent: Monday, June 19, 2017 11:48 AM
To: Adams, Alexandra; Miller, Brad; Westlake, Libby; Slack, Cora; Cho, Joy
Subject: RE: ALERT: Week in Review (Sending @ 2)

Looks good. Can we include the Romanchuk column from last week as well? And the two columns below... for some reason, google search does not pick up on a lot of our columns...

<http://www.timesreporter.com/opinion/20170618/local-perspective-legislation-strengthens-our-families-and-communities>

<http://www.wnewsj.com/opinion/columns/44479/wilmingtons-indeed-split-tacular>

From: Adams, Alexandra
Sent: Monday, June 19, 2017 11:09 AM
To: Miller, Brad <Brad.Miller@ohiohouse.gov>; Best, Carolyn <Carolyn.Best@ohiohouse.gov>; Westlake, Libby <Libby.Westlake@ohiohouse.gov>; Slack, Cora <Cora.Slack@ohiohouse.gov>; Cho, Joy <Joy.Cho@ohiohouse.gov>
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Sent: Monday, June 19, 2017 11:52 AM
To: Best, Carolyn; Adams, Alexandra; Miller, Brad; Westlake, Libby; Cho, Joy
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Here's the link to the Romanchuk column:

http://www.richlandsource.com/opinion/romanchuk-remembering-the-significance-of-the-flag/article_ef66a680-4f77-11e7-8e12-9725e86e333a.html

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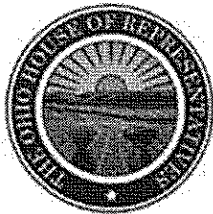
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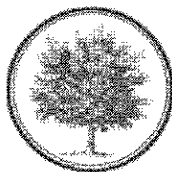
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Subject: BUCKEYE BLOG: Spurring the Ohio Miracle with Sound Policy

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THE BUCKEYE INSTITUTE

Spurring the Ohio Miracle with Sound Policy

By Quinn Beeson and Orphe Pierre Divounguy Ph.D.
June 19, 2017

Every year, The Buckeye Institute and the Fraser Institute release *Economic Freedom of North America* (EFNA), an index ranking economic freedom in the states. The rankings look at the ability of individuals to act in the economic sphere free of undue restrictions, such as a high tax burden or labor market regulations.

Academics, economists, and policy experts gather each year at the EFNA Network Conference to discuss the rankings and how states can improve. At this year's conference - happening today and Tuesday - The Buckeye Institute's lead economist, Orphe Pierre Divounguy, Ph.D., will present research titled *Decomposing Economic Prosperity and the 'Texas Miracle': Rethinking Measures of Economic Freedom and the Role of Taxation*. A mouthful, right? Luckily for you, we have summarized the presentation, which looks at the differences between Ohio and Texas in the rankings.

Historically, Ohio has ranked rather poor compared to the rest of the United States - in 2016 we ranked 38th. While Texas, on the other hand, has experienced what many have termed the "Texas miracle," referring to the state's seemingly miraculous economic performance, which has as much to do with its free-market policies as it does with its abundance of natural resources. Since there isn't much that we can do about Ohio's natural resources we ask: How else can Ohio's economy be transformed to mirror the successes Texas is having?

In 2014, Texas's per capita real gross domestic product (GDP) was \$54,026 - almost \$5,700 more than Ohio's at \$48,339. Now, Ohio may not be blessed with the same amount of natural resources as the Lone Star state, but there are certainly ways to improve our economic prospects, particularly if the "Texas miracle" has as much to do with its free-market policies.

The EFNA index first examines how government spending affects economic freedom - a favorite of free-market advocates. Government spending, however, is not the main attribute that differentiates Texas and Ohio. Despite the fact that Ohio's budget needs to be trimmed, and we have offered many **recommendations on ways to do that**, spending alone may not be the magic potion Ohio is looking for.

The second factor the EFNA index ranks is tax policy across United States. Not surprisingly, a low tax burden has a positive effect on GDP. When tax rates are low, people have an increased incentive to work because they are able to keep more of their paycheck - thus, leading to higher investment and higher incomes. However, not all taxes have the same effect on behavior.

Taxes that penalize investment and labor such as income and business taxes have a more harmful effect than taxes on consumer goods. According to the Tax Foundation's ***Facts & Figures 2017*** report, Texas has a higher effective tax on consumer goods (sales tax) and no individual income tax compared to Ohio's highly progressive individual income tax and relatively average sales tax.

Texas also scores consistently higher than Ohio on labor market freedom, the final category examined by the EFNA index. Could the regulatory framework be to blame for why Ohioans are less productive than Texans? Evidence in economics literature shows that labor regulations cause employers to not hire new workers and keep the less productive ones, thus decreasing the overall productivity of the firm.

Over burdensome labor regulations can slow down hiring and reduces productivity, which harms economic growth. Unions are partly to blame for a more rigid labor market

in Ohio. **Economists** argue that unions result in **business profit loss**, decrease the **availability of jobs**, and **slow economic growth**. Union membership also significantly decreases **average labor productivity** "by reducing managerial flexibility, introducing restrictive work rules, and limiting the use of merit-based compensation." In Ohio, 12.4 percent of the **working population** are members of a union, while in **Texas**, only four percent of workers are unionized.

There isn't much that Ohioans can do about our state's natural resources. However, there is plenty we can do to help our economic outcomes by adopting pro-growth policies. If Ohio wants to experience its own economic miracle, we must ask our legislators to eliminate policies that slow growth, such as burdensome tax rates and labor regulations that ultimately hurt the workers they were meant to protect. Only then will we begin to close the gap between our state and freer, wealthier states like Texas.

Quinn Beeson is an economic policy analyst with The Buckeye Institute's Economic Research Center, and Orphe Divounguy, Ph.D. is the lead economist with the Economic Research Center.

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Founded in 1989, The Buckeye Institute is an independent research and educational institution - a think tank - whose mission is to advance free-market public policy in the states.

The Buckeye Institute is a non-partisan, non-profit, and tax-exempt organization, as defined by section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue code. As such, it relies on support from individuals, corporations, and foundations that share a commitment to individual liberty, free enterprise, personal responsibility, and limited government. The Buckeye Institute does not seek or accept government funding.



The Buckeye Institute, 88 East Broad Street,
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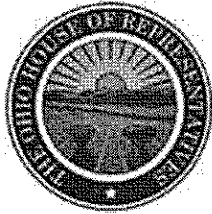
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To: Miller, Brad <Brad.Miller@ohiohouse.gov>; Best, Carolyn

<Carolyn.Best@ohiohouse.gov>; Westlake, Libby <Libby.Westlake@ohiohouse.gov>; Slack, Cora <Cora.Slack@ohiohouse.gov>; Cho, Joy <Joy.Cho@ohiohouse.gov>
Subject: ALERT: Week in Review (Sending @ 2)



OHIO HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Majority Communications Department

GOP Week in Review

6/12/17 – 6/18/17

Columbus Dispatch: The Daily Briefing: Ohio Senate president talks insurance mandates at White House

He was joined by Sen. Steve Wilson, R-Maineville, Rep. Mark Romanchuk, R-Mansfield, and Rea Hederman Jr. of the Buckeye Institute.

Cincinnati Business Courier: Ohio dogs soon may get their day on restaurant patios

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Dayton Daily: Backers want Ohio Aviation Hall of Fame at future monument site

State Rep. Rick Perales, R-Beavercreek, has introduced a bill establishing a nine-member board to oversee the Hall of Fame and a 2022 deadline for construction.

WKEF/WRGT: Group in Springfield demanding crackdown on payday lenders in Ohio (??)

The bill was introduced earlier this year by Springfield Republican Representative Kyle Koehler and Toledo Democratic Representative Mike Ashford.

Daily Advocate: Old Glory withstands the changes of time

As public servants of this great nation, our loyalty to "Old Glory" is of the utmost importance; we must uphold the values it represents.

Akron Legal News: Student aid program proposed for prospective truck drivers

"The commercial trucking sector is an area in need of qualified workers to fill jobs which are currently available," Rep. Nathan Manning, R-North Ridgeville, told members of the Education and Career Readiness Committee. "In addition to the current available employment, Ohio Job and Family Services projects that over 18,000 new jobs will be created in the industry by 2024.

From: Adams, Alexandra
Sent: Monday, June 19, 2017 3:36 PM
To: Slack, Cora; Best, Carolyn; Westlake, Libby; Miller, Brad; Cho, Joy
Subject: UPDATED Week in Review



OHIO HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Majority Communications Department

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From: Miller, Brad

Sent: Monday, June 19, 2017 4:05 PM

To: Adams, Alexandra; Slack, Cora; Best, Carolyn; Westlake, Libby; Cho, Joy

Subject: RE: UPDATED Week in Review

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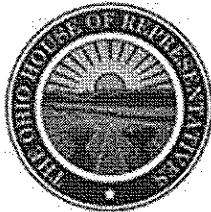
Add Dayton Daily News. Then looks good to me.

From: Adams, Alexandra

Sent: Monday, June 19, 2017 3:36 PM

To: Slack, Cora <Cora.Slack@ohiohouse.gov>; Best, Carolyn <Carolyn.Best@ohiohouse.gov>; Westlake, Libby <Libby.Westlake@ohiohouse.gov>; Miller, Brad <Brad.Miller@ohiohouse.gov>; Cho, Joy <Joy.Cho@ohiohouse.gov>

Subject: UPDATED Week in Review



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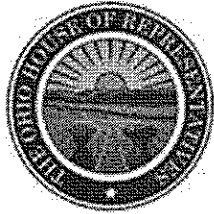
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From: Ohio House Republican Communications
Sent: Monday, June 19, 2017 4:53 PM
Subject: GOP Week in Review 6/12/17 – 6/18/17



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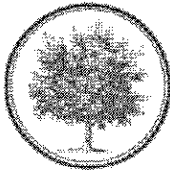
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From: The Buckeye Institute
Sent: Tuesday, June 20, 2017 6:19 PM
To: Adams, Alexandra
Subject: The Buckeye Institute's Greg Lawson Calls for Greater Education Choice and Opportunities for Ohio's Families

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 20, 2017

**The Buckeye Institute's Greg Lawson Calls for
Greater Education Choice and Opportunities for Ohio's Families**
Lawson Testifies Before the Ohio House Education and Career Readiness Committee

Columbus, OH - The Buckeye Institute's Greg R. Lawson testified today before the Ohio House Education and Career Readiness Committee on Opportunity Scholarship program and education savings accounts that are contained in House Bill 200. **In his testimony** (see full testimony below), Lawson, who is a research fellow at The Buckeye Institute and a leader in the Ohio school choice movement, urged Ohio to give greater education options and opportunities to families.

"Despite the exceptional resources devoted to schools and education over the last few decades, we have yet to see academic gains commensurate with those investments. At least one reason we seem unable to reap significant gains lies in our failure to adapt to the changing realities of our new century," said Lawson. "Our education model remains stuck

in the post-Industrial Age of 20th century mass production while our children-the supposed beneficiaries of that model-live and think in the increasingly made-to-order 21st."

Citing a recent report he co-authored on **education savings accounts (ESA)**, Lawson highlighted the benefits of ESAs and the success they have seen in other states. "ESAs give families the purchasing power to create a customized education for their children, empowering them to order from an à la carte menu of education services, instead of suffering the one-size-fits-all model of education currently provided by their government-assigned local public school," said Lawson. "ESAs allow parents to purchase textbooks, hire tutors, enroll students in online classes, pay private school tuition, and even save money for college. Not surprisingly, in states that have already implemented ESA programs, parents have expressed their approval."

In closing, Lawson praised the progress Ohio has made and encouraged further changes that will give parents and families more control of their children's education. "We are pleased to see Ohio take another step in joining the ranks of these school choice sister states. The Opportunity Scholarship, or any other ESA program, are the types of policies that will further empower parents and students to pursue an education tailored to their individual needs and dreams."

###

**Interested Party Testimony to the
Ohio House Education and Career Readiness Committee on House Bill 200**

**Greg R. Lawson, Research Fellow
The Buckeye Institute for Public Policy Solutions
June 20, 2017**

Thank you, Chairman Brenner, Vice Chair Slaby, Ranking Member Fedor, and members of the Committee for the opportunity to testify today regarding the Opportunity Scholarship. My name is Greg R. Lawson, and I am the Research Fellow at **The Buckeye Institute** for Public Policy Solutions here in Columbus.

The Buckeye Institute has long been a champion of school choice. In the early days of the Cleveland Scholarship and the dawn of Ohio charter schools, we defended the right of every parent to seek and provide the education best suited to their children. So we take great pride in Ohio's national leadership in the school choice movement.

The "Opportunity Scholarships" in House Bill 200 will join with other Ohio programs to give families even more education options and opportunities. House Bill 200 will continue to shift the balance of power in education from a bureaucratic establishment to its rightful place-parents.

Despite the exceptional resources devoted to schools and education over the last few decades, we have yet to see academic gains commensurate with those investments. At least one reason we seem unable to reap significant gains lies in our failure to adapt to the changing realities of our new century. Our education model remains stuck in the post-Industrial Age of 20th century mass production while our children-the supposed beneficiaries of that model-live and think in the increasingly made-to-order 21st.

Today our children watch videos on demand -- choosing not only the movie they want to watch, but when and where and how they want to watch it. They expect customized service -- on demand-and they get it, in practically every facet of lives except their education. In the name of modernity and progress, schools today offer digital gadgets-iPads, Smartboards, and Chromebooks-but the education they provide is far from personal, customized, or individually tailored to meet the specific needs of specific students. Education continues to be delivered *en masse* rather than on demand, as if learning is somehow impervious to customization.

Part of the problem still lies with education's bureaucratic entrenchment. And part of the solution remains school choice-the critical process of tearing down the bureaucratic silos of our beleaguered education system.

House Bill 200 and the "Opportunity Scholarship" combine the current EdChoice voucher, the EdChoice income eligible expansion, and the Cleveland Scholarship, and streamline the structure of these programs to simplify the application process and expand the pool of eligibly children.

Currently, eligibility for EdChoice scholarships is based upon a failing schools model. This relatively rare structure for voucher programs allows for too much gamesmanship and includes "safe harbor" provisions that have rendered hundreds of otherwise eligible schools ineligible for the program.

And even though the EdChoice expansion scholarship is income-based, its low eligibility threshold restricts its impact. Consequently, thousands of students miss out on significant EdChoice options. By shifting to a single-income eligibility model that allows for scholarships up to 400 percent of the federal poverty guidelines, House Bill 200 will provide more students with more options.

In addition to improvements afforded by the "Opportunity Scholarship," House Bill 200 also includes education savings accounts -- or ESAs. This innovative school choice feature significantly expands learning options for families. As The Buckeye Institute **recently explained**, ESAs begin to realign the education paradigm toward meeting "consumer" interests, namely, parents, children, and taxpayers. By creating a more responsive education system, ESAs give families the purchasing power to create a customized education for their children, empowering them to order from an à la carte menu of education services, instead of suffering the one-size-fits-all model of education currently provided by their government-assigned local public school. I have attached a copy of **our report** to my testimony for your convenience.

The additional flexibility offered by ESAs distinguishes them from traditional voucher models, making them more like Ohio's Special Needs and Jon Peterson scholarships. ESAs allow parents to purchase textbooks, hire tutors, enroll students in online classes, pay private school tuition, and even save money for college. Not surprisingly, in states that have already implemented ESA programs, parents have expressed their approval.

In 2011, Arizona became the first state to offer education savings accounts, and currently extends that option to children with special needs; children in active duty military families; children of fallen soldiers; children in underperforming schools; children on tribal lands; children entering kindergarten; and siblings of ESA-eligible students.

Two months ago, Arizona expanded her program yet again to include more prospective students. Building on Arizona's groundbreaking efforts, Nevada created a universal ESA option in 2015 for all K-12 students. Since then, Florida, Tennessee, and Mississippi have established ESA opportunities, and many other states are now actively considering proposals to provide or expand ESA options for their families.

We are encouraged to see Ohio joining the ranks of these school choice sister states. House Bill 200 and the "Opportunity Scholarships" will continue Ohio's progress in empowering parents and students to pursue an education tailored to their individual needs and dreams.

Thank you for your time and attention today. I would be happy to answer any questions that the Committee may have.

###

Founded in 1989, The Buckeye Institute is an independent research and educational institution - a think tank - whose mission is to advance free-market public policy in the states.

The Buckeye Institute is a non-partisan, non-profit, and tax-exempt organization, as defined by section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue code. As such, it relies on support from individuals, corporations, and foundations that share a commitment to individual liberty, free enterprise, personal responsibility, and limited government. The Buckeye Institute does not seek or accept government funding.



The Buckeye Institute, 88 East Broad Street,
Suite 1120, Columbus, OH 43215

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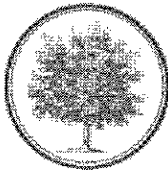
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Sent by info@buckeyeinstitute.org

From: The Buckeye Institute
Sent: Wednesday, June 21, 2017 10:41 AM
To: Adams, Alexandra
Subject: The Buckeye Institute's Greg Lawson Urges Ohio to Reduce Bureaucratic Occupational Licensing Requirements

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Contact: Lisa Gates, Vice President of Comms

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June 21, 2017

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The Buckeye Institute's Greg Lawson Urges Ohio to Reduce Bureaucratic Occupational Licensing Requirements

*Lawson Testifies Before the Ohio House Government
Accountability and Oversight Committee*

Columbus, OH - The Buckeye Institute's Greg R. Lawson testified (see full testimony below) today before the Ohio House Government Accountability and Oversight Committee, where he urged the state to remove barriers to employment for thousands of cosmetologists across Ohio. The policies, included in House Bill 189 would make Ohio more competitive, more prosperous, and more attractive to entrepreneurs and their employees.

Highlighting the absurdity in Ohio's occupational licensing requirements, Lawson, a research fellow at The Buckeye Institute, said, "Unfortunately, Ohio cosmetologists must

complete 250 more hours of training than their peers in Pennsylvania and 500 more hours than hairdressers in New York. The onerous training required for Ohio's cosmetologists is even more ridiculous when compared to the 150 hours of training required to be a state certified emergency medical technician."

Lawson continued, "With Ohio law currently requiring cosmetologists to have *10 times* the training of basic EMTs, the need for licensing reform doesn't get much clearer."

Citing The Buckeye Institute's report *Forbidden to Succeed: How Licensure Laws Hold Ohioans Back*, Lawson revealed that Ohio's occupational licensing burdens are some of the worst in the nation. "Remarkably, nearly every Ohio license that requires training can be earned in less time in another state," said Lawson. "The state certainly needs to require appropriate training and licensing for jobs with health and safety concerns, such as physicians and pilots, and no one disputes this. But such concern fades dramatically when applied, for example, to auctioneers, travel guides, and hairdressers."

In closing, Lawson praised the progress Ohio has made and encouraged further changes that will make Ohio more competitive, more prosperous, and more attractive to entrepreneurs and their employees. "For a state still struggling to create new jobs, relieving these burdens remains imperative...House Bill 189 advances the state's anti-red-tape reform effort and will remove at least some of the occupational licensing obstacles faced by Ohio's working men and women."

###

**Interested Party Testimony to the
Ohio House Government Accountability and Oversight Committee on House Bill 189**

**Greg R. Lawson, Research Fellow
The Buckeye Institute for Public Policy Solutions
June 21, 2017**

Thank you, Chairman Blessing, Vice Chair Reineke, Ranking Member Clyde, and members of the Committee, for the opportunity to testify regarding House Bill 189. My name is Greg R. Lawson. I am the research fellow at **The Buckeye Institute** for Public Policy Solutions, a free-market think tank that believes low taxes and limited government regulations will lead to a more prosperous Ohio.

House Bill 189 helps to address Ohio's "over-licensing" problem and will continue the important work started by Senate Bill 213 in the last General Assembly that lowered

barriers of entry to Ohio's salon industry. Others have already addressed specific provisions in this bill, so let me just say that The Buckeye Institute generally supports reducing required education hours and we encourage policymakers to embrace license reciprocity with our sister states. After all, licensed cosmetologists in good standing in New York and Massachusetts should not have to clear additional hurdles to provide the same services and earn their living here in Ohio.

Unfortunately, Ohio cosmetologists must complete 250 hours of more training than their peers in Pennsylvania and 500 more hours than hairdressers in New York.[1] The onerous training required for Ohio's cosmetologists is even more ridiculous when compared to the 150 hours of training required to be a state certified Emergency Medical Technician.[2] With Ohio law currently requiring cosmetologists to have *10 times* the training of basic EMTs, the need for licensing reform doesn't get much clearer.

Ohio's over-licensing problem extends well beyond the local hair salon. The Buckeye Institute's report *Forbidden to Succeed: How Licensure Laws Hold Ohioans Back* revealed that Ohio's occupational licensing burdens are well above average.[3] Of Ohio's 31 moderate-income occupations requiring licensure, 15 require hundreds or thousands of hours of training. Remarkably, nearly every Ohio license that requires training can be earned in less time in another state.[4] The state certainly needs to require appropriate training and licensing for jobs with health and safety concerns, such as physicians and pilots, and no one disputes this. However, such concern fades dramatically when applied, for example, to auctioneers, travel guides, and hairdressers.

Onerous licensing burdens -- essentially requiring workers to ask the government for a permission slip to earn a living -- make Ohio less competitive, less prosperous, and less attractive to entrepreneurs and their employees. Licensing requirements only make finding a job more difficult. Every unnecessary license is a red-taped hurdle that must be cleared. Every hour of unnecessary, unpaid training needed to satisfy bureaucratic requirements is an hour not spent earning tips, impressing a boss, serving a customer, or climbing a corporate ladder. Those are hours of productivity, hours of opportunity that young, low-income workers sorely need, but that the state continues to take away. For a state still struggling to create new jobs, relieving these burdens remains imperative. Although Ohio has done yeoman's work to recover from the Great Recession, she has not yet rebounded from the tech bubble burst and is still down more than 100,000 private sector jobs from March 2000. The state's labor force participation rate has improved, but at just 63.1 percent in April, more remains to be done.[5]

Even more concerning are the daunting employment prospects faced by many in Ohio's minority communities. Nationally, the unemployment rate among African Americans

remains much higher than among other demographics. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the most recent unemployment rate was 7.9 percent for African Americans -- more than double the 3.8 percent unemployment rate for whites.[6] Similarly, unemployment confronts a staggering 29.3 percent of young African Americans between 16 and 19, and 12.8 percent of young whites.[7]

Given the relatively high number of African Americans and women in the salon industry, reforming Ohio's cosmetology laws offers a direct response to those alarming statistics.

House Bill 189 advances the state's anti-red-tape reform effort and will remove at least some of the occupational licensing obstacles faced by Ohio's working men and women. Of course, much more than HB 189 is needed and I look forward to exploring additional solutions with you and continuing our conversation on this important issue.

Thank you for your time and attention. I would be happy to answer any questions that the Committee might have.

[1] Ohio. Rev. Code §4713.28.

[2] Ohio Admin. Code §4765-15-05.

[3] Tom Lampman, *Forbidden to Succeed: How Licensure Laws Hold Ohioans Back*, The Buckeye Institute, November 18, 2015.

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, "Employment Situation Indicators for Ohio, April 2017," accessed May 30, 2017.

[6] Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Table A-2. Employment Status of Civilian Population by Race, Sex, and Age," U.S. Department of Labor, accessed May 30, 2017.

[7] *Ibid.*

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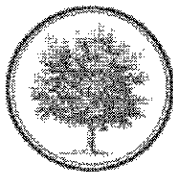
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June 21, 2017

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Buckeye Institute Experts Weigh-In on Ohio Senate Passed Budget

Columbus, OH - The Ohio Senate passed its version of Ohio's biennial budget this evening and experts from **The Buckeye Institute** issued their reactions on spending, the Senate's Medicaid proposal, occupational licensing reform, and criminal justice reform.

Spending

"The final Ohio Senate budget keeps spending on a tight leash by historical budget standards, which is a real accomplishment," said **Greg R. Lawson**, research fellow at The Buckeye Institute. "However, there are many reductions that can still be made to assure the budget remains balanced. This could be especially important if revenues remain slower than anticipated and to assure for long-term sustainability of state budgets moving forward. We would hope some of these reductions will be considered in the conference committee."

Senate's Medicaid Proposal

"The Senate proposal to freeze Medicaid expansion is a prudent step to help focus Medicaid services on the needy," said **Rea S. Hederman Jr.**, executive vice president at The Buckeye Institute and a nationally recognized expert in healthcare policy. "Medicaid expansion enrollment has drastically exceeded expectations and an enrollment freeze will enable the state to refocus the program. The Senate should also add a Medicaid freeze to the Healthy Ohio waiver that is also in the budget."

Senate's Proposal Requiring State Agencies to Seek the Least Restrictive Occupational Licensing Requirements

"We are very pleased to see that the Senate has added a provision to the budget that will submit state agencies to efficiency reviews and that the Senate has made it clear they intend for occupational licensing requirements to be a part of those reviews," said Greg R. Lawson, research fellow at The Buckeye Institute. "This provision will ensure state agencies impose the 'least restrictive' regulatory requirement when dealing with occupational licenses, which will help alleviate unnecessary burdens on thousands of Ohioans by making it easier for them to cut through state red tape and start working more quickly."

Criminal Justice Reform

"When the Senate unveiled their budget last week we commended them for retaining the **Target Community Alternatives to Prison (TCAP)** program and we are pleased it was included in the final version of the Senate's budget," said **Daniel J. Dew**, criminal justice fellow at The Buckeye Institute's **Legal Center**. "TCAP will enable counties to rehabilitate low-level, non-violent offenders in their communities, which studies have shown is more effective and less costly than prison. While participation will be voluntary for less populous counties, we anticipate counties will jump on board as judges and county officials see their sister counties benefiting from TCAP."

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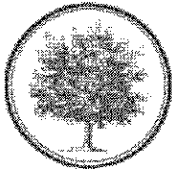
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THE BUCKEYE INSTITUTE

Onwards to Conference Committee: Ohio's Biennial Budget Passes the Senate

By Greg R. Lawson
June 23, 2017

As always, the state budget, passed every two years, is the single most important piece of legislation passed by the Ohio General Assembly. Tax, education, health care, criminal justice, and local government issues are all touched on in this critical legislation. Getting budget policy right means making sure resources are spent wisely on the things government must do. Just as importantly, it means enhancing liberty, creating a better environment for job and economic growth, and securing prosperity for Bob and Betty Buckeye.

The budget that cleared the Senate on June 21 is a very good step forward. However, there is always more that can be done. In this case, there is definitely more spending that should be reduced and bolder reforms that should be embraced on taxes, education, and health care.

That said, as the next chapter of the budget commences and we move to the all-important Conference Committee, **The Buckeye Institute** has highlighted what has been done right and what can be done to improve the budget.

Spending

The Senate **version of the budget** decreased Governor Kasich's original All Funds budget by \$3 billion over fiscal years 2018 and 2019. The FY 2018 appropriations is an increase of 2.7 percent over the estimated FY 2017 spending, and the FY 2019 appropriation is 1.5 percent over FY 2018.

By historical budget standards this is positive. The average over the biennium comes in at 2.1 percent. Though this remains above recent inflation and state GDP growth, it tracks more closely than other recent budgets. For example, the **previous biennial budget**, when enacted, was an increase of 7.6 percent in the first fiscal year and 2.1 percent in the second for an average of 4.85 percent over the biennium.

When looking at state-only general revenues, we see an increase of \$370.9 million over the proposed FY 2018-2019 budget when compared to the expected expenditures made in the previous biennium. This is an increase of only .8 percent. Given recent revenue shortfalls, this is important.

A further positive sign is the Senate maintained restraints on the ability of the Controlling Board to increase Medicaid spending. This is wise policy given the serious questions regarding potential changes in federal Medicaid policy.

Despite this positive spending restraint, there are areas where further cuts (see our **Piglet Book**) could be made in order to maintain long-term budget sustainability.

More than \$200 million in increased foundation formula funding for education should be reconsidered. Ohio continues to spend ever-increasing amounts on K-12 education, with limited academic gains to show for it. Ohio needs a much broader conversation in *how* this money is spent.

Also, more than \$770 million in general revenue funding is still being spent as a revenue sharing distribution through the Local Government Fund (LGF). The Buckeye Institute continues to **maintain** this revenue should be used to further reduce personal income tax rates across the board. By reducing this revenue sharing, Ohio will empower local residents and taxpayers to hold their local officials accountable for local decisions.

Taxes

Ohio tax reform has led to positive economic growth for the state and this will continue over time as the state shows budget restraint.

Both the Senate and the House made the right call to not raise taxes or shift taxes to particular industries, such as **oil and gas companies**. Both chambers also rightly resisted the urge to hike the tobacco tax, which would open up the door for **smuggling**, in addition to other unintended consequences.

While The Buckeye Institute prefers Governor Kasich's proposal to simplify municipal income tax filings for businesses, the current reform included by the Senate still allows businesses to avail themselves of a simpler system. While this is merely the tip of the iceberg when it comes to reforming Ohio's **singularly unique, complex, and burdensome municipal income tax structure**, it is still a step forward.

Medicaid

The current version contains language pushing the Administration to seek both the **Healthy Ohio** waiver and a **State Innovation waiver**. When combined, these two waivers will control Medicaid costs, create personal responsibility requirements for Medicaid recipients, and will ease the transition to a better private insurance marketplace. These waivers will also include fewer mandates that balloon insurance costs.

The Senate proposal to freeze Medicaid expansion is a prudent step to help focus Medicaid services on the needy. Expansion enrollment has drastically exceeded expectations and an enrollment freeze will enable the state to refocus the program.

One item ripe for Conference Committee consideration is to ensure that the Controlling Board guidelines on Medicaid spending are robust enough to ensure the Administration **must** obtain approval before spending on the expansion.

Criminal Justice Reform

Governor Kasich's budget included an expansion of the **Department of Rehabilitation and Correction Targeted Community Alternatives to Prison (TCAP)** program, which provides grants to counties to rehabilitate low-level, non-violent offenders locally, a **more effective** approach than prison at a fraction of the cost. Expansion of TCAP would provide more resources to communities as they deal with the opioid epidemic, increase public safety, and save taxpayer dollars.

The Senate version only binds Ohio's 10 most populous counties to the TCAP program, with the remaining 77 counties participating on a voluntary basis. We are confident, that once the benefits of TCAP are realized, more counties will want to participate.

Agency Review Process

The Buckeye Institute is pleased to see that the Senate has added a provision to the budget that will submit state agencies to efficiency reviews and that the Senate has made it clear they intend for occupational licensing requirements to be a part of that review.

These provisions will ensure state agencies impose the 'least restrictive' regulatory requirement when dealing with occupational licenses, which will help alleviate unnecessary burdens on thousands of Ohioans by making it easier for them to cut through state red tape and start working more quickly.

The inclusion of occupational licensing requirement in these reviews, begin to address issues we discussed in our report *Forbidden to Succeed: How Licensure Laws Hold Ohioans Back*.

Conclusion

Now the Conference Committee will begin its work and they should build on the fairly successful efforts made to restrain spending and reform the key driver of increased spending - Medicaid. The committee should also retain sound tax provisions including the municipal income tax reform, criminal justice reforms including TCAP, and retain the administrative agency review process including the new definition regarding least restrictive regulations.

By doing these things, with the addition of more cuts, the committee could further improve an already solid budget.

Greg R. Lawson is the research fellow at The Buckeye Institute.

###

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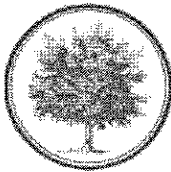
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June 26, 2017

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House Bill 289 Introduced, Buckeye Weighs-In on the Need for Occupational Licensing Reform

Columbus, OH - Representative Robert McColley and Representative Ron Hood today introduced important legislation, which will reduce barriers to employment for thousands of Ohioans by requiring the state to impose the least restrictive type of occupational licensing regulation to ensure consumer protection.

The legislation will also establish a sunrise review process on new occupational licensing bills to ensure they meet the least restrictive standard, and the bill will establish a sunset review process of licensing boards to ensure they are necessary protect public health and safety. Over time, the use of these reviews will help clean up antiquated licensing requirements while preventing new ones from cluttering Ohio's laws.

"As legislators, it is our duty to be watchdogs over these licensing agencies to ensure they are not imposing overly burdensome regulations that impose barriers to entry and, ultimately, pick winners and losers. **House Bill 289** does just that by providing oversight to make sure we are not unjustifiably preventing Ohioans from making a living," said Rep. McColley. "We thank The Buckeye Institute and other free-market focused groups for their ongoing input."

The Buckeye Institute has long spoken out on the need to reduce burdens created by bureaucratic **occupational licensing**, a position that is supported by the **Heritage Foundation**, **Cato Institute**, and **Brookings Institute**, and was supported by the **Obama Administration**. In fact, research has shown that Ohio **sacrifices more than 40,000 jobs** due to occupational licensing, and that **18 percent of Ohioans require a license** in order to earn a living in their chosen profession. Further, the **cost of hiring a licensed worker is approximately 15 percent higher** than an unlicensed worker with the same level of experience doing the same job, and families in Ohio could **save \$775 per year** with occupational licensing reform.

"The Buckeye Institute has long argued that we need to lower barriers of entry for all Ohioans into their chosen professions," said Greg R. Lawson, research fellow at **The Buckeye Institute**. "By making it the policy of the state to be the least restrictive as possible when it comes to occupational licensing, Ohio takes a large step to rolling back and preventing the 'permission slip' approach to regulation that is harming all too many Ohio workers."

###

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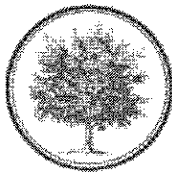
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June 28, 2017

The Buckeye Institute's Greg Lawson: Occupational Licensing Requirements are an Obstacle to Economic Success

Lawson Testifies Before the Ohio Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee

Columbus, OH - The Buckeye Institute's Greg R. Lawson testified (see full testimony below) today before the Ohio Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee, where he once again urged the state to remove barriers created by bureaucratic **occupational licensing** requirements that keep Ohioans from earning a living in their chosen profession.

As with the policies in House Bill 189, which **Lawson testified on last week**, the policies in Senate Bill 79 will make Ohio more competitive, more prosperous, and more attractive to entrepreneurs and their employees.

Lawson, the research fellow at The Buckeye Institute, opened his testimony highlighting the broad support reducing burdensome occupational licensing requirements has. "The Buckeye Institute, the **Heritage Foundation**, the **Brookings Institute**, and the **Obama Administration** do not often all agree on an issue. However, we have all agreed on the need to relieve the burdens created by bureaucratic occupational licensing that afflict workers and families with low- to middle-incomes." Lawson continued, "By authorizing legislative panels to weed through Ohio's overgrown thicket of licensing boards, the policy in Senate Bill 79 gives lawmakers a much-needed tool for uprooting bureaucratic thistles that deprive Ohioans of the potential fruits of their labor. Thus, this bill takes a welcome step toward improving Ohio's job market and making it easier for Ohio's working class families to prosper.

While the policies in Senate Bill 79 will make improvements to Ohio's "byzantine" licensing requirements, Lawson noted that further improvements to reduce the negative impacts of licensing requirements can be made. "Senate Bill 79 improves the status quo, but unfortunately it lacks the proverbial teeth necessary to force state licensing boards to prove that they are essential for ensuring public safety rather than merely defending entrenched market interests. The bill could be strengthened by including sunset provisions for state licensing boards and commissions similar to the automatic provisions applied to cabinet agencies."

In closing, Lawson highlighted the negative impact on employment licensing requirements have, particularly in minority communities where unemployment is higher. "Licensing requirements make finding a job more difficult. Every license requirement raises a red-taped hurdle for workers to clear before earning a living or starting a new career. Every hour of unpaid training needed to satisfy bureaucratic requirements is an hour not spent earning tips, impressing a boss, serving a customer, or opening a business. Those are hours of lost productivity, hours of opportunity that young, low-income workers sorely need, but that the state continues to take for itself."

###

**Interested Party Testimony Submitted to the
Ohio Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee on Senate Bill 79**

**Greg R. Lawson, Research Fellow
The Buckeye Institute for Public Policy Solutions
June 28, 2017**

Thank you, Chairman Coley, Vice Chair Uecker, Ranking Member Schiavoni, and members of the Committee for the opportunity to testify regarding Senate Bill 79. My name is Greg Lawson and I am the Research Fellow at **The Buckeye Institute** for Public Policy Solutions here in Columbus.

The Buckeye Institute, the **Heritage Foundation**, the **Brookings Institute**, and the **Obama Administration** do not often all agree on an issue. However, we have all agreed on the need to relieve the burdens created by bureaucratic occupational licensing that afflict workers and families with low- to middle-incomes. By authorizing legislative panels to weed through Ohio's overgrown thicket of licensing boards, the policy in Senate Bill 79 gives lawmakers a much-needed tool for uprooting bureaucratic thistles that deprive Ohioans of the potential fruits of their labor. Thus, this bill takes a welcome step toward improving Ohio's job market and making it easier for Ohio's working class families to prosper.

No one disputes that state licensing requirements are needed in many cases and industries to help ensure public safety. Requiring appropriate education and training for physicians, health care providers, pilots, and truck drivers, for example, helps safeguard the general public in our hospitals, roads, and runways. However, these concerns fade dramatically when applied to auctioneers, travel guides, and hairdressers -- all of whom are subject to Ohio's byzantine licensing requirements.

According to the Heritage Foundation, occupational licensing requirements cost the average U.S. household \$1,033 per year.[1] Analysts across the political spectrum recently revealed significant sources of occupational licensing and their adverse effects on the nation's job and labor markets. As part of the Brookings Institute's Hamilton Project, for instance, researchers discovered that much of the growth in occupational licensing requirements stems from professional associations and not from public interest groups.[2] Unsurprisingly, their research also showed that stringent licensing requirements result in fewer providers of the services subject to the requirements.[3]

The Obama Administration echoed these concerns in a July 2015 report issued by the White House that proposed a framework for reducing burdens on those seeking to enter the professional ranks.[4] Last year, The Buckeye Institute released ***Forbidden to Succeed: How Licensure Laws Hold Ohioans Back***, which showed not only that Ohio's licensing burdens are well above the national average, but also that nearly every Ohio license that requires training can be earned in less time in another state.[5]

The ladder to economic prosperity is hard enough to climb without the state making it even harder and more expensive. Fortunately, several provisions in Senate Bill 79 hand the

General Assembly new tools for weeding out some of Ohio's most unnecessary and burdensome licenses. Senate Bill 79 codifies provisions that would automatically sunset cabinet agencies absent specific reauthorization. It authorizes the General Assembly to review Ohio's licensing boards and provides good guidance for how legislative committees should conduct their examinations. It also makes clear that state policy will rely on the "least restrictive form of regulation" as a means of consumer protection.

Those forms of regulation, in order from least to most restrictive, are as follows: market competition; third-party or consumer-created ratings and reviews; private certification; specific private civil cause of action; actions under the Ohio Consumer Sales Practices Act; regulating the process of providing specific goods or services; inspection; bonding or insurance; registration; government certification; specialty occupational license for medical reimbursement; and occupational licensing.

Senate Bill 79 improves the status quo. Unfortunately, it lacks the proverbial teeth necessary to force state licensing boards to prove that they are essential for ensuring public safety rather than merely defending entrenched market interests. The bill could be strengthened by including sunset provisions for state licensing boards and commissions similar to the automatic provisions applied to cabinet agencies.

Policymakers should recognize that requiring workers to ask the government for permission to earn a living makes Ohio *less* competitive, *less* prosperous, and *less* attractive to entrepreneurs and their employees. For a state still struggling to create new jobs, "less" is not more.

Ohio has come a long way since the Great Recession, but it has not yet rebounded from the tech bubble burst and remains down more than 100,000 private sector jobs from its peak in March 2000.[6] The state's labor force participation rate has improved in recent months and is now slightly higher than the national rate, but in recent years, Ohio has flirted ominously with historically low participation rates. So, although Ohio's job market continues to improve, it still has a long way to go.

Licensing requirements make finding a job more difficult. Every license requirement raises a red-taped hurdle for workers to clear before earning a living or starting a new career. Every hour of unpaid training needed to satisfy bureaucratic requirements is an hour not spent earning tips, impressing a boss, serving a customer, or opening a business. Those are hours of lost productivity, hours of opportunity that young, low-income workers sorely need, but that the state continues to take for itself.

Tragically, such burdens are borne no less lightly by those in Ohio's minority communities -- communities already facing daunting employment prospects. Nationally, the unemployment rate among African Americans remains much higher than among other demographics. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the most recent unemployment rate was 7.5 percent for African Americans -- more than double the 3.7 percent unemployment rate for whites.[7] Similarly, unemployment confronts a staggering 27.3 percent of young African Americans between 16 and 19, and 11.4 percent of young whites.[8] Given the relatively high number of African Americans and women in the salon industry.

Reforming Ohio's occupational licensing regime will help remove at least some of the burdens and obstacles to economic success.

Thank you for your time and I welcome any questions that the Committee might have.

[1] Salim Furth, *Costly Mistakes: How Bad Policies Raise the Cost of Living*, Heritage Foundation, November 23, 2015.

[2] Morris M. Kleiner, *Reforming Occupational Licensing Policies*, Brookings Institute, March 2015.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] The White House, *Occupational Licensing: a Framework for Policymakers*, July 2015.

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] The Buckeye Institute, "Ohio by the Numbers - October 2015," The Buckeye Institute.

[7] Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Table A-2. Employment Status of Civilian Population by Race, Sex, and Age," U.S. Department of Labor, accessed June 26, 2017.

[8] *Ibid.*

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